

# **From 'Factions' to Attack Ads – A History of American Politics**

Class 7

William A. Reader

E-mail: [wreader@cox.net](mailto:wreader@cox.net)

# What We Will Cover Today

- Finish up our discussion of Radio and its Political Impacts
- Discuss the 1932 Election and its consequences
  - The Repeal of Prohibition and its legacies
- Discuss the 1952 Election and its consequences
  - Political Ads

# What We Will Cover Today - 2

- 1952 Election
  - MacCarthyism
  - Election of Eisenhower
- Discuss Television and its Political Impacts
  - Notes about Political Advertising
  - Examples of political ads

# A Note About Roosevelt, Hoover & Radio

- FDR was the first president to address the nation directly by radio, as opposed to simply permitting a speech to a group to be broadcast
  - FDR saw radio as a way of conducting an end run around newspapers - which generally in their editorial pages opposed his reelection in 1936
- While radio changed Hoover from a poor platform speaker into an effective campaigner, he made a fatal mistake on the radio in 1932
  - He let his speech run over and knock listeners' favorite radio programs off the air

# Impact of Television on Radio

- Changed radio from a broadcasting medium to a narrowcasting medium
  - Radio survived because it could target specific demographic groups (Blacks, teenagers, farmers, and ethnic minorities) that Network television tended to ignore
- Caused the most popular radio programs and stars to migrate to TV
- Changed the prime listening hours of radio from the evening to the commuting hours
  - This turned radio from an entertainment medium into an information medium

# Impact of FM Radio

- In the 1970s, music left AM radio for FM
- To fill the void, most AM radio stations moved to a talk radio format
- Talk radio became the one mass medium available to the underclass
- Satellite technology allowed stations to distribute their shows nationwide
  - This paved the way for Rush Limbaugh and Howard Stern

# Impact of Talk Shows

- Right-wing talk show hosts pushed the Republican Party more and more to the Right
  - Mobilized the Conservative base of the party against Liberal Republicans
    - This resulted in the defeat of many Liberal and Moderate Republicans in primaries
    - It led many Republican politicians to have a “no enemies to the right” stance lest they face primary opposition
  - Helped elect politicians who disdain compromise, especially on taxes

# Impact of Talk Shows - 2

- Rigidity on the Right on the issue of taxes has provoked a reciprocal rigidity on the Left on the issue of entitlements
  - The “No Net Tax Increase” pledge of Grover Norquist meets the “Do not touch entitlements” pledge of Nancy Pelosi
- The result: stalemate, gridlock, increasing budget deficits, a failure to deal with real problems, and a growing contempt for Congress



# 1932 Election

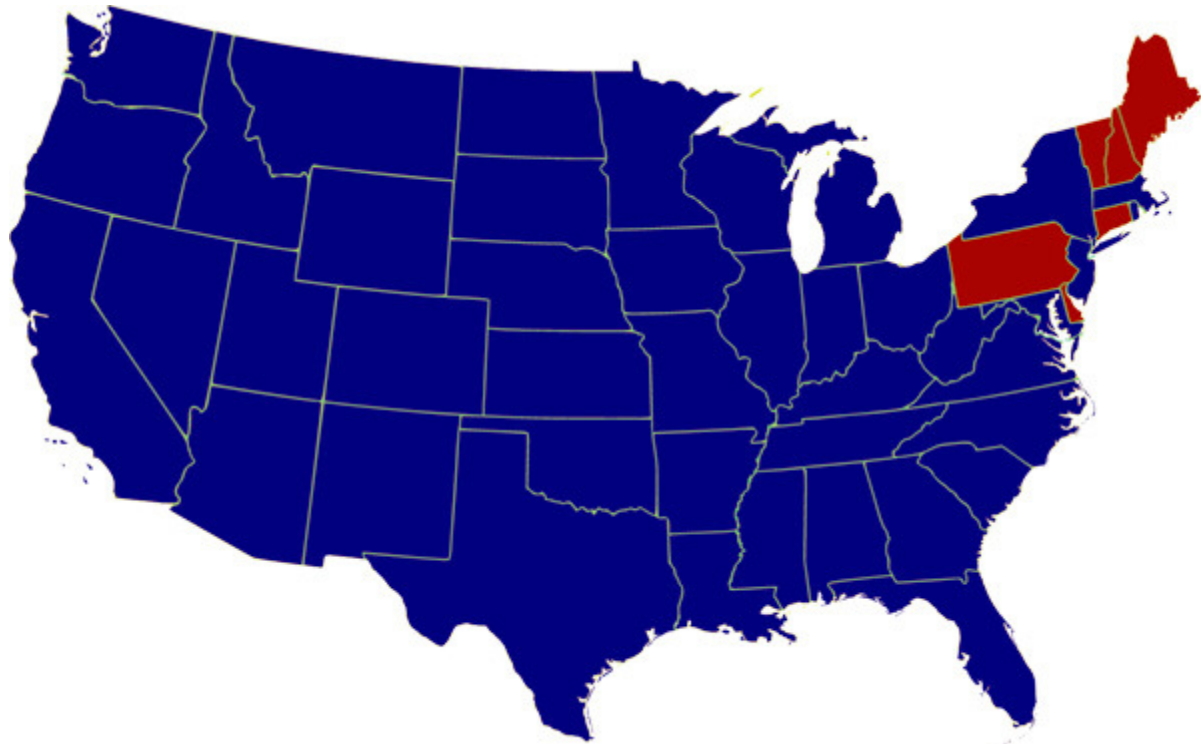
# 1932 Election

- The Democrats nominated Franklin D. Roosevelt and John Nance Garner of TX
- The Republicans nominated Herbert Hoover and Senator Charles Curtis of KS
- The key issue was the Great Depression and its resulting unemployment and poverty. A secondary issue was Prohibition

# 1932 Election

- Roosevelt won in a landslide, winning 57.4% of the popular vote and 472 electoral votes
  - Roosevelt won back the rural, dry, Protestant Democrats that defected in 1928 to Hoover
  - He also won over Republican voters who had suffered from the Great Depression
- Hoover won only 39.6% of the popular vote and only 59 electoral votes
- Interestingly, voter turnout increased by only 2,946,000 over 1928

# 1932 Election



# The Great Depression, the 1932 Election & the New Deal

- The Great Depression brought about the election of FDR
  - It also made possible the rise of Nazism in Germany and Fascist Nationalism in Japan, paving the way for World War II
    - German and Japanese expansionism led to a conflict between Interventionists and Isolationists
  - It also led many intellectuals and educated sons of the elite to become converts to Communism
    - The Great Depression seemed to confirm Marxist predictions of the collapse of capitalism
    - The Soviet Union seemed to be immune from the effects of the Great Depression
- To cope with the Great Depression, Roosevelt instituted the New Deal

# The Great Depression, the 1932 Election & the New Deal - 2

- The combination of the Great Depression and the New Deal had the following major political and intellectual effects
  - Intellectually discredited Classical Economic Liberalism (Laissez-Faire) for half a century
    - Led to the emergence of Keynesian Economics as the dominant school of economic thought (until the 1970s)
  - Completed the creation of the modern Welfare State
  - Popularized the idea that “full employment” should be the major goal of economic policy

# Significance of the 1932 Election - 1

- The 1932 Election marked the end of the McKinley-Progressive Era and the beginning of the New Deal Democratic coalition
  - The Democrats now became the majority party
  - The Democrats won a large majority in both houses of Congress and, except for two brief periods, retained control of the Senate until 1980 and the House until 1994
- The New Deal created a coalition of unionized workers, farmers, Catholics, Jews, white Southerners, new immigrants, and intellectuals
  - It also began to Northern Blacks away from the Republican Party

# Significance of the 1932 Election - 2

- In an attempt to stave off defeat, the Republicans tried to portray the Democrats as un-American and said that Roosevelt's proposed New Deal was "the same philosophy of government which has poisoned all Europe" and contained "the fumes of the witch's cauldron which boiled in Russia"
- This was to presage future Republican attacks on both the Democrats and the New Deal



# Significance of the 1932 Election - 3

- The 1932 and its resulting New Deal had an interesting effect upon the Republican Party
  - In the Northeast, with its large ethnic European populations, the Party was pushed in a Liberal direction
    - Republicans elected to statewide office were usually liberal or moderate Republicans like Jacob Javits, Prescott Bush, Leverett Saltonstall, and Margaret Chase Smith instead of pre-New Deal conservatives like Henry Cabot Lodge, Nelson Aldrich, and Frank Brandegee

# Significance of the 1932 Election - 4

- The 1932 and its resulting New Deal had an interesting effect upon the Republican Party (cont)
  - In the Midwest and West, with their large small-town and rural populations, the Party was pushed in a Conservative direction
    - Liberal Republicans like Frank Norris, Robert LaFollette, William Borah, and Hiram Johnson were replaced by Conservatives like Joe McCarthy, Edward Jenner, William Knowland, and George Malone

# Significance of the 1932 Election - 5

- The 1932 Election results paved the way for the repeal of the 18<sup>th</sup> (Prohibition) Amendment
  - People saw the election as a referendum on the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment with the result that the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment passed within months

# Legacies of Prohibition

# A Note About Prohibition

- Prohibition had its origins in the West – an area where crime rates were high and drinking was common
  - As one historian noted, “A mixture of alcohol and kids with guns always causes problems”
- Much of the Wild West violence and drunkenness was connected to the saloon
- Moral reaction against the saloon led to the movement for Prohibition
- The blockage of Prohibition by politicians allied to the vice industries led to support for female voting enfranchisement
  - This led to the Nineteenth Amendment – Woman’s Suffrage

# The Anti-Saloon League

- Knit together a wide constituency opposed to the liquor traffic and the saloon
- Focused on the single issue of liquor
- Willing to accept incremental gains
- Supported any politician willing to vote “dry” regardless of political party
- Prototype of the modern lobby group that uses its political power to influence public policy

# Liquor and Culture Clashes

- Prohibition led to the first of the culture clashes that have marked American politics in the 20<sup>th</sup> century
  - Culture clashes reflect the fact that laws not only prescribe or prohibit certain behaviors but also enshrine certain sets of values over others
- The Republican response during the 1920s was to talk dry to keep the drys and Anti-Saloon League happy but to minimally and corruptly enforce Prohibition to keep the wets and the bootleggers happy

# Factors Leading to Repeal

- Four factors led to the eventual repeal of Prohibition
  - The hypocrisy involved in the corrupt enforcement of Prohibition
  - Organized crime, gangland violence, and other unintended and unwanted consequences of Prohibition
  - An organized Repeal movement
    - Included many former supporters of Prohibition
  - The Great Depression



# Legacies of Prohibition

- The model of a single-issue lobbying group
  - The Anti-Saloon League became the prototype for a whole host of single-issue lobbying groups
    - The idea of rating Congressmen on key votes to create an index that indicates how favorable or unfavorable a Congressman is to the goals of a lobbying organization & whether that Congressman should be supported or opposed in the next primary and/or general election

# Legacies of Prohibition - 2

- Organized crime as a big nation-wide business
  - Whereas prostitution, racketeering, and gambling had largely been local, rum-running and bootlegging required organization, capital, and links to gangs in other cities and suppliers outside the U.S.
    - Organized crime figures learned how to run large criminal organizations, set up legitimate businesses as fronts, launder money, and corruptly influence politicians and law enforcement

# Legacies of Prohibition - 3

- The mere fact of the existence of organized crime was to have important political effects
  - Led to several Congressional investigations of organized crime
    - Kefauver Committee
    - McClellan Committee

# Legacies of Prohibition - 4

- A new café society that linked Social Register names, Broadway and Hollywood stars, prominent politicians, businessmen, and a few reporters and intellectuals

# 1952 Election

# 1952 Election

- For the first time since 1928, no incumbent president was running for reelection
- Both presidential candidates had to struggle to win their nominations
  - The 1952 Republican nomination contest pitted Eisenhower against Sen Robert A. Taft
  - The 1952 Democratic nomination contest pitted Stevenson against Sen Estes Kefauver of TN and Sen Richard Russell of GA
- The Republican candidates were GEN Dwight D. Eisenhower and Sen Richard Nixon
- The Democratic candidates were Gov Adlai E. Stevenson of IL and Sen John Sparkman of AL

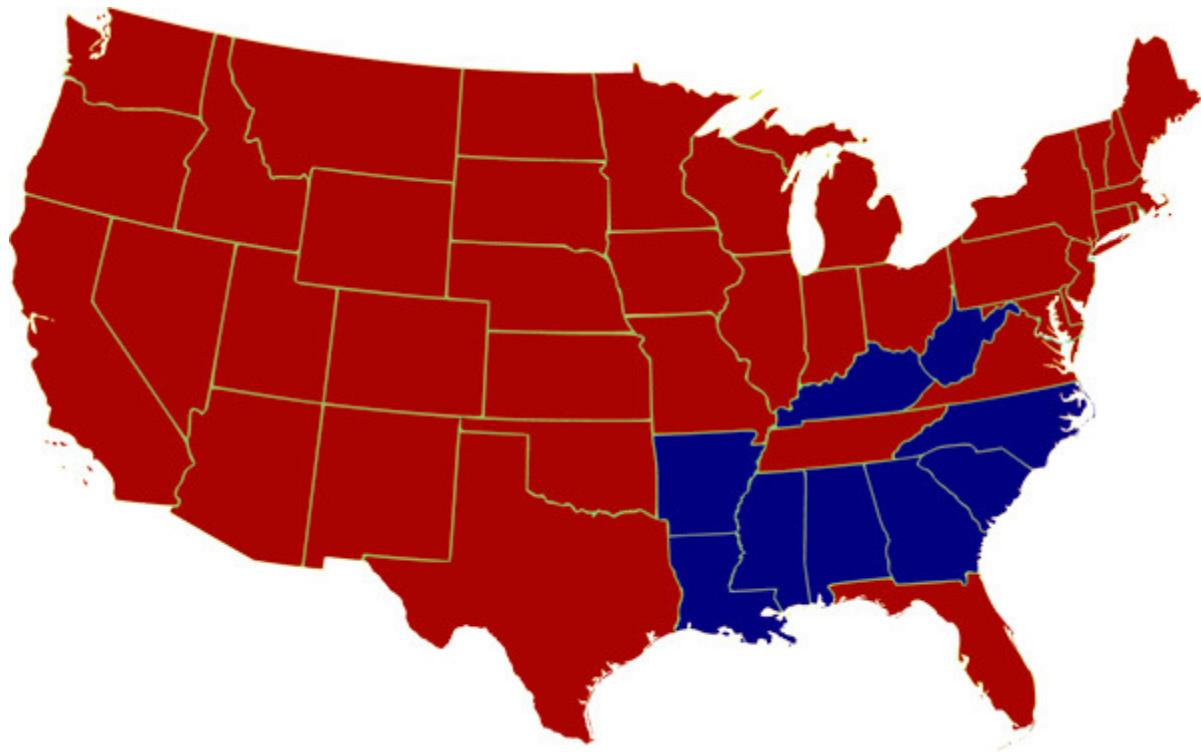
# 1952 Election Issues

- The major issues in the election were:
  - War in Korea
  - Corruption in the Truman Administration
  - Communism
    - Communist espionage at home
    - Policy toward the Soviets abroad
    - Who lost China?
  - Republican attitudes toward the New Deal
    - “Taft lost the nomination but won the nominee”
  - Nixon’s private slush fund

# 1952 Election Campaign

- The 1952 Election campaign was the first campaign in which television played a significant role
  - By 1952, 34% of households had a TV set
  - Eisenhower and his campaign aides had a better understanding of the TV medium than did Stevenson
    - Eisenhower made use of political TV commercials & 20-second issue spots
    - Stevenson mostly made 30-minute speeches that often got cut off before completion because Stevenson lacked time discipline





# Significance of the 1952 Election

- Marked the first election in which television played a significant role in the outcome
- Marked the beginnings of the political commercial
  - While the Republicans embraced political advertising, many Democrats felt that it insulted the democratic election process

# Significance of the 1952 Election - 2

- The 1952 election was a deviating election
  - A minority party won a presidential election by nominating a war hero and running against an unpopular war
- The election taught the Republicans that there was political mileage to be made in questioning the loyalty and toughness of the Democrats
  - This paved the way for the excesses of McCarthyism and led to the Army-McCarthy hearings

# Significance of the 1952 Election - 3

- The Republican Convention resurfaced and widened the split between liberal Republicans and conservatives
  - In 1964, the Conservatives won dominance of the party with the nomination of Barry Goldwater
- Three factors played a role in the Conservative triumph in 1964
  - The emergence of Sunbelt Conservatism
  - The demographic shift of population to the Sunbelt that started during World War II combined with the movement of Republicans to the Sunbelt
  - The reaction of the South against the civil rights movement

# Significance of the 1952 Election - 4

- The election resulted in Dwight D. Eisenhower becoming president
  - It also brought Richard Nixon to national prominence and made him a dominant force in the Republican Party
- Eisenhower made three major decisions that were to have significant long-term effects
  - He appointed Gov Earl Warren of CA as chief justice and William Brennan of NJ as an associate justice
  - He authorized the CIA to mount a coup in Iran against the government of Mohammed Mossadegh
  - He decided to support the government of Ngo Dinh Diem in South Vietnam

# Television and its Political Impacts

# Television – Homes with Sets

Year	1948	1950	1952	1955	1956	1960	1965
% Homes with sets	3%	10%	34%	67%	81%	87%	94%

# General Impact of Television - 1

- Changed our conception of what is a fact
  - Facts reach us, not in the form of personal perception, not as something we ourselves have seen or heard, but in the form of communications, as something we have only heard or seen on TV
- Altered the significance of physical presence at events
  - Experiencing an event no longer required physical presence
    - Events now staged more with the TV audience than with the physically present audience in mind



# General Impact of Television - 2

- There is evidence to suggest that TV has decreased our attention spans and contributed to Attention Deficit Disorder
  - This has led to sound bites replacing speeches and 15- or 30-second political commercials replacing 30-minute speeches or biographies
- Television has become ubiquitous in a whole host of public spaces
  - Large screens broadcasting any number of images and advertisements can be found in most sports arenas, restaurants, airports, and shopping malls, even concert halls

# General Impact of Television - 3

- Changed radio from a broadcasting medium to a narrowcasting medium
  - Radio survived because it could target specific demographic groups (Blacks, teenagers, farmers, and ethnic minorities) that Network television tended to ignore
- Changed the prime listening hours of radio from the evening to the commuting hours
  - This turned radio from an entertainment medium into an information medium

# General Impact of Television - 4

- One genre originated by TV was the media event
  - Unlike other events, it is live, out-of-the-ordinary, pre-planned, organized by some public body, usually attracts a large audience, and is often ceremonial
  - The real event is the one experienced by the TV audience, not by those physically present at the event

# General Impact of Television - 5

- Another genre created by television was the “psuedo-event”
  - Pseudo-events were events concocted by public relations people and the publicity-seeking merely to get media attention
    - Press conferences
    - Book signings
    - Protest demonstrations
    - Symbolic events

# General Impact of Television - 6

- Like radio in its initial phases, it created a top-down uniform mass popular culture
  - In some respects, this led to high-quality programming, especially news programming
  - Politically, it exposed people to opposite points of view and to candidates of both major parties

# Impact of Cable & Satellite TV

- The multiplicity of channels changed TV from a broadcasting medium to a narrowcasting medium
  - Instead of three major networks offering similar-type programming, there were dozens of specialized channels that focus on topics that appeal to small audiences
- All-news channels (like CNN, MSNBC, Fox News) did to network news departments what TV did to newspapers and news magazines
  - It ended their reign as news sources and led the networks to focus on entertaining features, news analysis, and news commentary

# Political Impact of Television - 1

- Changed the nature of political campaigns  
-1
  - TV enabled candidates to reach the voters directly without the need to use intermediaries
    - Before television (and radio), candidates had to resort to mediators such as political parties and newspapers to reach the electorate
  - Along with primaries, the disintermediation that TV introduced weakened the political parties and diminished the political clout of newspapers

# Political Impact of Television - 2

- Changed the nature of political campaigns – 2
  - Along with primaries, TV changed political conventions into coronations of a nominee chosen long beforehand
  - TV made debates a key element in the political campaign
  - TV led the media to portray campaigns as horse races



# Political Impact of Television - 3

- Brought celebrity culture into the political realm
  - Led entertainment and sports celebrities to go into politics and embrace political causes
  - Treated politicians in the same way they treated entertainment celebrities – “tabloid politics”
  - Focused policy discussions less on the intrinsic merits or demerits of a proposed policy or how a policy change would affect the public and more on its effect on poll numbers or re-election chances

# Political Impact of Television - 4

- Even more than radio and the movies, it changed how people looked upon politicians because it turned politicians into celebrities
  - Before radio (and movies), people were known because they were famous, very successful, or infamous – they had accomplished something that set them apart
  - With television, people became celebrities – known for being known because they appeared in the media

# Political Impact of Television - 5

- As celebrities, politicians have often become entertainers
  - Many former politicians have done television commercials and
  - Many current and former politicians have appeared on TV variety shows, soap operas, and sitcoms
- Conversely, many celebrities from the sports and entertainment worlds have gone into politics or run for public office
  - Fred Thompson goes from Senator to Television film star to presidential candidate
  - Ronald Reagan goes from film star and TV host to Governor and then President

# Political Impact of Television - 6

- Television turned political campaigns into largely rival television commercials
- These ads generally broke down into four categories
  - Introductory ads – introduce the candidate (and his family) to the public
  - Identification ads – identify the candidate with a certain lifestyle
  - Attack ads – going negative on the opposition candidate and/or issues he espouses
  - Defense ads – ads refuting opposition charges or negative ads